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# Poisoned site called high priority

## Toxins' spread alarms industrial park's neighbors

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STAFF WRITER

Citing possible short-term and long-term health risks, officials will try to make the contaminated Cornell-Dubilier site in South Plainfield a national environmental priority.

After an investigation by the federal Environmental Protection Agency identified dangerous levels of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, and heavy metals in the Bound Brook and New Market Pond in Piscataway, officials will investigate further dangers and seek to take more safety measures.

The contamination stems from Hamilton Industrial Park, a 25-acre site on Hamilton Boulevard in South Plainfield, now home to 15 businesses. It formerly was owned by Cornell-Dubilier Electronics, which allegedly disposed of PCB-contaminated materials and other hazardous substances at the site.

Earlier this year, the Cornell-Dubilier property was targeted for cleanup under the Superfund program after the EPA found high levels of contami-

nants in the soil at the site, through which the Bound Brook crosses.

PCBs are oily chemicals that were used widely as coolants, insulating materials and lubricants in electrical equipment until the U.S. banned them in 1977 because of health effects associated with exposure.

According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, breathing contaminated air or coming in contact with PCBs has caused such problems as cancer and liver, kidney and skin damage in animal studies, but not enough information has been accrued to know exactly how they affect humans.

Levels above the federal Food and Drug Administration advisory level of 2 parts per million were also found in 13 residential properties on Spicer Avenue in South Plainfield, a neighborhood close to the Hamilton Boulevard site.

The EPA will try to get the site placed on the federal Superfund National Priorities List of hazardous waste sites next month. That would allow cleanup efforts to extend to long-term problems, whereas now

EPA officials said they are focusing on "acute dangers," such as the contaminated fish found in the water.

A "fish advisory" was announced yesterday because fish with up to 36 ppm were discovered in the water.

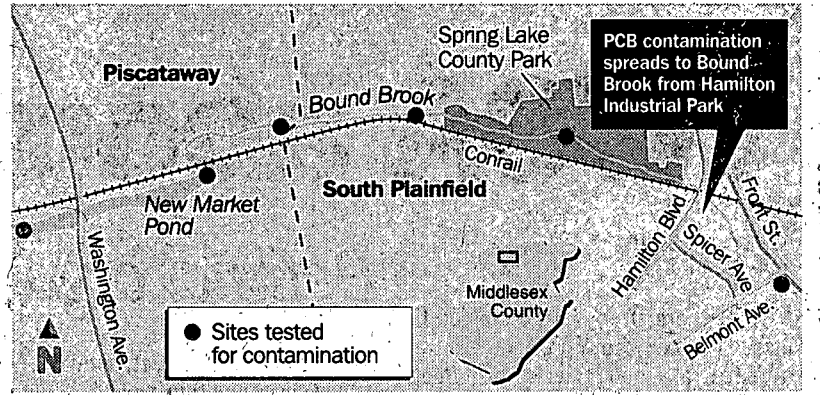
At a meeting Thursday night with the 13 homeowners on Spicer Avenue, borough officials and representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection and the EPA said the contamination on their properties — less than 10 ppm — is not enough to cause harm to humans.

"If (the 36 parts per million found in some fish) only calls for an advisory (not to eat the fish), certainly 10 (parts per million) isn't a concern," said Ed Kubala, a South Plainfield councilman who was at that meeting.

Piscataway Mayor Helen Merolla said she hoped an informal public meeting for residents and officials would be held within two weeks.

She echoed the EPA and DEP officials who urged residents not to be frightened about immediate health hazards beyond the fish.

"There's no question there's cause



Staff graphic

for concern, but certainly not alarm," she said.

Some residents are dissatisfied with information they've been given and the way investigations have proceeded. Robert Spiegel, director of the Edison Wetlands Association, said the DEP has subscribed to the "magic fence theory" — the belief that contamination does not spread to other areas.

"As far as I'm concerned, there is no environmental protection in New Jersey," he said.

The EPA issued an order to the current owner of the Hamilton site, D.S.C. of Newark Enterprises, requiring them to limit access to areas of

known contamination, take necessary actions to limit the movement of contaminants to the Bound Brook through surface water runoff, and pave driveways and parking areas within the park.

D.S.C. already has paved a dirt roadway, and the other measures are expected to be completed by the end of the summer, officials said.

The EPA also will continue studying samples from the Bound Brook. Fox said that would be done in segments to determine how far the contaminants have spread. She said that could take six to eight months if they have spread through the entire length of the 8-mile-long brook.

inaccuracies

- Headline &

subhead

who is it?  
claimed?  
not substantiated

levels above

FDA advisory

found in 13

properties

meeting w/

residents, borough

officials and DEP

said cont is not

enough to cause

harm to humans

~~inaccuracies~~

inaccuracies

- Source Hamilton  
Industrial park

- EPA standard

2 ppm